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C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000138

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP AND INL; DEA FOR OF, OFF;
USPACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/31/2015

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: UWSA DRUG INDICTMENTS: ONE WEEK LATER

REF: A. RANGOON 88

[B](#). RANGOON 66 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: COM Carmen Martinez for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The GOB has yet to go public with a reaction to the January 24 indictments against seven top UWSA leaders, although sources claim the GOB (and the Wa) are preparing to hold press conferences. UNODC staff and NGO partners, convinced that all is quiet and normal in Wa territory, are anxious to return to the region and resume program activities. The GOB has not authorized such a return, intimating to UNODC that future, though unspecified, law enforcement actions are pending--a likely reference to the GOB's anticipation of further U.S. indictments, not to any meaningful GOB measures against the indicted Wa leaders. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) The Government of Burma has thus far had no public reaction to the January 24 unsealing of indictments in New York against seven leaders of the United Wa State Army (UWSA) (ref B). According to January 25 Chinese press reports, the GOB captured and returned to China a major heroin smuggler (Ma Shunsu). However, the reports indicated (and DEA has confirmed) that Burmese police and army officials had originally arrested Ma on January 9 and the action has no connection to Operation Warlord.

[1](#)3. (C) According to a senior GOB police source, the UWSA plans to hold a press conference in the Wa capital of Pangsang o/a February 5 addressing the indictments. The GOB, the source told Emboff, has been planning to hold its own press conference but has postponed doing so until the Wa go public with their reaction to the indictments. That said, the GOB source opined that "it is quite obvious (the SPDC) will not arrest or extradite the Wa leaders; the government will not do anything to destabilize the prevailing peace agreement situation."

[1](#)4. (C) A UNODC source in Pangsang reported that the city is calm and most UWSA leaders have left town for their home villages to celebrate Chinese New Year. The source had spoken personally with UWSA Commander Pao Yu Hsian (Pao Yu Chang) who "seemed very surprised that his name was on the list of indictments." Pao and other Wa leaders indicated to the source that, despite the indictments, they would maintain their pledge to make Wa territory poppy-free by June 2005.

[1](#)5. (SBU) UNODC's country representative concluded after reviewing DOJ statements that the unsealing of the indictments had few direct implications for the organization's current programs in Burma and he decided against issuing a press release (ref A). He has also expressed to Emboffs a desire to return his expatriate staff to Wa territory in order to resume programs. However, the country rep acknowledged that GOB counterdrug officials have not authorized their return, intimating to UNODC that future, though unspecified, law enforcement actions are pending (Comment: the GOB is likely referring to further U.S. indictments, not GOB measures. End Comment).
Martinez